



NORTH DAKOTA
DEPARTMENT *of* HEALTH

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release:
July 27, 2004

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MEDIA ADVISORY **(News Release Follows Below)**

BISMARCK, N.D. – To answer media questions about whooping cough (pertussis) activity in the state, the North Dakota Department of Health will hold a telephone media availability Tuesday, July 27, 2004, at 1 p.m. The following department officials will participate in the 1 p.m. conference call:

- Larry Shireley, state epidemiologist
- Heather Weaver, Immunization Program manager

To connect to the conference call, the media is asked to follow these steps:

- 1) Dial 866.262.1846.
- 2) Once you are connected, enter *3282378*. (Please note: The star key must be pressed before and after the pin number.)
- 3) If you have trouble connecting, call the help desk at 800.263.3863 option 2.

Members of the media who wish to attend in person can meet at 1 p.m. in the Sakakawea Room on the main floor of the State Capitol Building, Bismarck N.D.

Weekly conference calls with the media will be held each Tuesday as warrants. For more information about the conference call, contact Stacy Eberl, public information coordinator, at 701.328.4619.

State Health Department Reports 209 Cases of Whooping Cough

BISMARCK, N.D. – The North Dakota Department of Health today announced that 209 cases of whooping cough (pertussis) have been reported in the state. This number reflects cases identified since June 22, 2004.

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600 E. Boulevard Ave. Dept. 301, Bismarck, North Dakota 58505-0200
Phone: 701.328.2372 Fax: 701.328.4727 E-mail: health@state.nd.us

Visit the health department home page at www.ndhealth.gov.

The following is a breakdown by county of whooping cough cases reported to the department:

- Barnes – 1
- Benson – 3
- Burleigh – 18
- Cass – 3
- Dunn – 1
- Grand Forks – 3
- McHenry – 9
- McIntosh – 1
- McLean – 7
- Mercer – 1
- Mountrail – 4
- Pierce – 1
- Rollette – 3
- Sargent – 1
- Stark – 1
- Stutsman – 1
- Ward – 148
- Williams – 3

Whooping cough is a contagious disease that lasts for many weeks and causes severe coughing with a “whooping” sound or coughing that leads to vomiting. The disease can be life threatening for infants and can cause moderate to severe illness in adults.

Whooping cough is characterized by one or more of the following symptoms:

- Prolonged cough (lasting for a week or more)
- Long spells of coughing with spasms
- Coughing with a whooping sound
- Coughing that leads to gagging or vomiting

People who have any of the above symptoms should contact their health-care provider to be evaluated for whooping cough. People who do not have any symptoms do not need to be tested.

The Department of Health urges people to take measures to prevent the spread of whooping cough, including:

- Frequent hand washing with soap and water. Hand washing is one of the best preventive measures, not only for whooping cough, but for all diseases.
- Using good respiratory manners. Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when sneezing or coughing.
- Staying home from work or other recreational activities when you’re ill. This will help prevent the spread of whooping cough to your friends, coworkers and family.

Children younger than 7 should be vaccinated to help prevent them from contracting the disease. Parents should contact their health-care providers if they have questions about their

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child's vaccination status. Children can receive their first vaccination against whooping cough when they are 6 weeks old. No vaccine is available for adults or children age 7 and older.

Updated whooping cough numbers will be posted on the North Dakota Department of Health's Disease Control website at www.health.state.nd.us/disease. Numbers will be updated regularly. For more information about whooping cough, call 800.472.2180 or your local public health unit.

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Please note: To access archived news releases and other information, visit the North Dakota Department of Health Press Room at www.nddohpressroom.gov.